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Congressman seeks blacklisting of fish, food products smugglers

MANILA BULLETIN:

File raps vs blacklisted fish importers, Yamsuan tells DA

BY ELLSON QUISMORIO

Jul 3, 2024 03:47 PM

AT A GLANCE

- The Department of Agriculture (DA) should press charges against the fish importers that would get blacklisted as a result of its campaign against agricultural smuggling, Bicol Saro Party-list Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan said.
- Yamsuan chairs the House Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources.



Bicol Saro Party-list Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan (PPAB)

The Department of Agriculture (DA) should press charges against the fish importers that would get blacklisted as a result of its campaign against agricultural smuggling.

Thus, said House Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources Chairman Bicol Saro Party-list Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan, who commended the agency for intending to get tough on unscrupulous traders.

“We will await the action of the [DA] on this matter. We are counting on Agriculture Secretary (Francisco Tiu) Laurel (Jr.) to make his move soon against these suspected smugglers,” Yamsuan said; referring to he filing of criminal cases in court.

Yamsuan issued the statement in response to Laurel's recent announcement of his plan to blacklist at least four importers suspected of acts classified as economic sabotage. Laurel said they involve one rice importer, two fish traders and a sugar importer.

"Blacklisting erring agricultural importers should not be the DA's only measure against them. If there is enough evidence, then criminal cases should be hurled against them in court," noted Yamsuan, a former assistant secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

The rookie congressman said blacklisted companies may just resort to using dummy firms to continue their illegal activities.

Yamsuan pointed out that under the current law, large-scale fish smuggling is classified as economic sabotage if the amount of the goods/ subject of the crime is at least P1 million as valued by the Bureau of Customs (BOC).

The punishment for this crime under Republic Act (RA) No.10845 is life imprisonment and a fine of twice the fair value of the smuggled fish products, along with the aggregate amount of the taxes, duties and other charges involved.

The measure has already been approved by both the Senate and the House of Representatives and is awaiting the President's signature.

"We hope that this will be signed by the President and enacted soon so that it could serve as a strong deterrent to agricultural smugglers," Yamsuan said.

"Agricultural smugglers undermine our collective goal to attain food security and jeopardizes the livelihood of our farmers and fisherfolk. They also place the safety of consumers at risk because smuggled food products do not undergo the necessary measures that are meant to ensure that these are fit and safe for human consumption," he added.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/3/file-raps-vs-blacklisted-fish-importers-yamsuan-tells-da>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Marcos on proposed 2025 budget: Filipinos first

BY ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS

Jul 3, 2024 02:35 PM

AT A GLANCE

- The DBM is set to submit the proposed FY 2025 National Expenditure Program to the House of Representatives on July 29, 2024.

"Filipinos first!"

This was how President Marcos summarized the proposed 2025 National Expenditure Program (NEP), saying it aims to create jobs, tackle rising prices, and reduce poverty.



President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. (bongbongmarcos/Instagram)

Marcos said this as he [approved](#) the proposed P6.352-trillion national budget on Tuesday, July 2.

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In an Instagram post late Tuesday, the President said the proposed budget is aimed at investing in "what matters most."

"Filipinos first!" he wrote.

"With our approved 2025 budget, we're investing in what matters most — creating jobs, strengthening healthcare, and expanding infrastructure," he said.

According to Marcos, the 2025 NEP is set to generate jobs, enhance healthcare, expand housing, and strengthen infrastructure, fueling economic growth across the country.

"Our goal is to tackle rising prices and reduce poverty, ensuring every Filipino benefits from our growing economy," he said.

According to Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman, the government has recalibrated its fiscal targets, adopting a pragmatic strategy to promote growth-enhancing fiscal consolidation.

She said revenues and expenditures are projected to rise annually by an average of 10.3 percent and 21 percent, respectively, from 2024 to 2028.

Infrastructure spending will be maintained at five to six percent of gross domestic product (GDP), focusing on sustainable deficit reduction.

Pangandaman said the fiscal targets and budget allocations are anticipated to free up resources for infrastructure development and other growth-promoting programs.

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) initially received a total budget proposal of P9.2 trillion. However, the approved budget ceiling is set at P6.3 trillion as approved by the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), reflecting limited fiscal space and considerations such as program readiness, agencies' absorption capacity, and alignment with expenditure directions.

The Total Expenditure Program is divided into four expense classes:

- **Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE): P2,424.1 billion**
- **Personnel Services expenditures: P1.787 billion**
- **Capital Expenditures: P1,292.6 billion**
- **Financial Expenses: P848.1 billion**

According to the DMB, P4,247 billion will be appropriated for government programs already authorized under existing laws. Meanwhile, 2.1 percent of the proposed budget will be allocated under unprogrammed appropriations as standby funds that can only be released when certain conditions are met.

The top 10 of the proposed FY 2025 Total Expenditure Program are in:

- 1. Education**
- 2. Public Works**

- 3. Health (including PhilHealth)**
- 4. Interior and Local Government**
- 5. Defense**
- 6. Social Welfare**
- 7. Agriculture**
- 8. Transportation**
- 9. Judiciary**
- 10. Justice**

The DBM is set to submit the proposed FY 2025 National Expenditure Program to the House of Representatives on July 29, 2024.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/3/marcos-on-proposed-2025-budget-philipinos-first>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Armyworm ravages Negros Island; Zubiri seeks DA help

BY [GLAZYL MASCULINO](#)

Jul 3, 2024 10:35 PM

BACOLOD CITY – Sen. Juan Miguel F. Zubiri is seeking the assistance of the Department of Agriculture (DA) against armyworm infestation on Negros Island.



ARMYWORMS have devastated farms in Negros Occidental. (Photo courtesy of Atty. Dino Yulo Facebook)

“I will call DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. to release emergency funds for Negros Occidental and other areas in Negros Island affected by the armyworm infestation,” Zubiri said in a press briefing at L’Fisher Hotel here on Wednesday, July 3.

Zubiri said that he learned about the infestation affecting corn and sugar plantations in the province when he arrived in this city on Tuesday night, July 2. “It is an offshoot of the El Niño phenomenon,” he added.

He said that the only way to fight the infestation is providing farmers with pesticides and insecticides. But Zubiri said that pesticides and insecticides are expensive, thus, he has to ask the DA for funding.

As of June 27, the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPA) reported that 40 barangays in nine areas in the province have been affected by armyworms – the cities of Himamaylan and Kabankalan and the towns of Isabela, Binalbagan, Moises Padilla, Ilog, La Castellana, Cauayan, and Murcia.

Mostly affected were corn plantations and sugarcane and banana plantations in Himamaylan City and Isabela town, respectively.

A total of 663 farmers with 558.23 hectares of plantations were affected. Himamaylan City has 307, 172 in Isabela town, 99 in Binalbagan, 39 in Moises Padilla, 36 in Kabankalan City, and five each in the towns of Ilog and La Castellana.

The OPA said that local government units (LGUs) in the province are on alert regarding the infestation.

It has provided available pesticides and pheromone attractants (lure) and facilitated aerial spraying in collaboration with Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) and partner-agencies.

The OPA has mobilized its climate resiliency management task force and conducted a series of information drives on expected pest outbreaks after a long drought and training on pest surveillance, management, and control.

It has recommended the emergency purchase of insecticides and personal protective equipment (PPE), assignment of standby vehicle for mobility in upland areas, augmentation of labor force for the spraying operation, and continuous surveillance, assessment, orientation, and conduct of pest control and management in collaboration with LGUs, DA, SRA, and other partner agencies.

The OPA recommended the continuous conduct of sustainable, participatory crop protection activities in the communities through people's organization and the activation of the Bantay Peste Brigade.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/3/armyworm-ravages-negros-island-zubiri-seeks-da-help>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA notifies WOAAH of Philippine's first Q fever case

[Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas](#) - The Philippine Star

July 4, 2024 | 12:00am



Photo showing Q fever and a man holding a goat.

CDC via Unsplash; Department of Agriculture / Released

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MANILA, Philippines — The introduction of “new” live animals has been the cause of the country’s first confirmed case of Q fever, the government said in a report submitted to the World Organization for Animal Health on July 1.

This developed after the Department of Agriculture (DA) confirmed that some of the Anglo-Nubian goats imported by the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) from the United States tested positive for the disease.

“The ‘event started’ date was when clinical signs were observed in some of the imported goats,” the report said, noting the Q fever infection started on Feb. 13.

On June 19, the DA-BAI conducted confirmatory testing at the Philippine Carabao Center-Biosafety and Environment Laboratory in the Science City of Muñoz in Nueva Ecija.

The DA said it culled 91 heads of goats and cattle in Barangay Napo in Santa Cruz, Marinduque to prevent the spread of Q fever.

Of the depopulated animals, 84 were goats while the rest were cattle.

The report indicated that 19 goats tested positive and three died of the disease.

The government said it conducted disinfection, movement control, quarantine, screening and disposal of carcasses, by-products and waste as well as stamping out programs in the affected barangay.

Surveillance in and outside the restricted zone of the outbreak will continue, the DA said.

A spokesperson for the US Department of Agriculture earlier told The STAR that the goats were free of any disease when they arrived in the Philippines.

Additional Q fever tests conducted by the BAI on imported goats on April 3, wherein some animals tested positive, were beyond the incubation period for the disease, the official said.

“The incubation period for Q fever ranges from two to 48 days. The animals had been in the Philippines for 81 days prior to the testing,” the spokesperson said.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/07/04/2367554/da-notifies-woah-philippines-first-q-fever-case>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA: Tomato prices up P180 per kilo

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

July 4, 2024 | 12:00am



Based on the DA's price watch, tomato prices ranged between P110 and P180 per kilo compared to last week's P70 and P140 per kilo.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The retail price of tomatoes has increased to P180 per kilo in Metro Manila markets, according to the Department of Agriculture.

Based on the DA's price watch, tomato prices ranged between P110 and P180 per kilo compared to last week's P70 and P140 per kilo.

Wholesale tomato prices have increased as they are priced between P70 and P120 per kilo in the trading post, Nueva Vizcaya Agricultural Terminal general manager Gilbert Cumila said.

Tomato supplies are sufficient, but wholesalers' competition to buy the farm product has contributed to price spikes.

"Nothing is dumped now as even those previously difficult to sell are being bought by traders," Cumila said.

In December 2023, farmers dumped tomatoes amid oversupply as its wholesale price fell to as low as P8 per kilo.

As for onions, its wholesale price remains stable, Cumila noted.

“I believe there is enough supply (of onions) within six to eight months,” he said.

The retail price of red onions ranged between P80 and P150 and white onions, between P60 and P120 per kilo.

Wholesale prices of most vegetables have increased, according to Cumila.

“(The wholesale price of) ginger ranged between P170 and P175 per kilo. Cabbage prices ranged from P25 to P35 per kilo,” he said.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/07/04/2367583/da-tomato-prices-p180-kilo>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA: P34.5 million approved for revitalized Kadiwa centers

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

July 4, 2024 | 12:00am



Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. on November 6, 2023.

STAR / Jesse Bustos

MANILA, Philippines — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has approved funding of P34.5 million for the revitalization of Kadiwa stores in Metro Manila.

Tiu Laurel issued Special Order 944 designating the Agribusiness and Development Division (AMAS) to facilitate the Kadiwa retail selling activities in the National Capital Region.

He approved the request of AMAS director Junibert de Sagun to allocate P34.5 million to fund the operation of Kadiwa retailing, selling and market matching activities.

The Kadiwa stores to be operated include 13 in Quezon City; 11 in Parañaque; eight in Las Piñas; three each in Pasay, Caloocan and Manila; two each in Mandaluyong and Muntinlupa, and one each in Navotas, Taguig and Marikina.

According to De Sagun, the Department of the Interior and Local Government identified the areas for the conduct of Kadiwa ng Pangulo, which is held every payday, twice a month.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said they would roll out the “Bigas 29” project tomorrow.

He said rice would be sold at P29 per kilo at more Kadiwa outlets.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/07/04/2367599/da-p345-million-approved-revitalized-kadiwa-centers>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA plans to cut pork imports by 60,000 MT

[Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas](#) - The Philippine Star

July 4, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) aims to reduce the country's pork imports by 60,000 metric tons (MT) this year by boosting local pig production through its P2.1 billion modified repopulation program.

The DA targets to substitute 10 percent of the country's imported pork or approximately 60,000 MT with domestic output by year-end.

The department plans to achieve its goal by “enhancing” and “refocusing” its banner swine repopulation program known as Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion (INSPIRE) program.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. issued Memorandum Circular (MC) 28 that modified the implementing guidelines of the program, which shall now be known as the Modified INSPIRE program.

“There is a need to enhance and refocus the implementing strategies of the repopulation program, to achieve the targets of the project and stabilize the price of pork in the retail market,” Tiu Laurel said in the document published recently.

The DA's repopulation program will now focus on sow-weaner operations through the establishment of multiplier and production farms with artificial insemination (AI).

Agriculture Undersecretary Deogracias Victor Savellano said the DA has a budget of P2.1 billion for its swine repopulation efforts this year.

Under the revised guidelines, the DA is now offering three packages to eligible grant beneficiaries by the government.

The first package is for the establishment of a 60-sow level production farm worth P16.21 million while the second package is for a 30-sow level capacity valued at P10 million.

The last package is for the establishment of a 30-sow multiplier farm also worth P10 million.

All three packages include a tunnel-ventilated housing as well as the provision of vaccinated gilts as well as AI shots.

“The beneficiaries shall adopt modern climate-controlled building systems or conventional facilities but compliant with biosecurity level 1,” the MC read.

The DA explained that the piglets produced from the multipliers farms would be distributed to the members of the beneficiary cooperatives, associations and local government units.

Meanwhile, pigs produced at the production farms would be distributed to members or existing grower-finisher farm projects of DA for finishing or would be sold through a contract with a registered buyer or a big swine company.

“It is expected that this approach would lessen the possibility of African swine fever (ASF) infection, facilitate sustained production of piglets, provision of technical support to beneficiaries and efficient monitoring organized by the farmer cooperatives and associations under the supervision of the LGU veterinary office or the Bureau of Animal Industry,” according to the updated guidelines.

The modified INSPIRE program would prioritize eligible beneficiaries in ASF-free areas, including islands.

The DA noted that its swine repopulation efforts yielded positive results for domestic hog production since the program began in 2022.

The country’s hog output inched up by three percent to a three-year high of 1.79 million metric tons in 2023, based on Philippine Statistics Authority data.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/07/04/2367471/da-plans-cut-pork-imports-60000-mt>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Sugar producers seek consultation on importation plan

By: [Jordeene B. Lagare](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 10:09 AM July 03, 2024



INQUIRER.net stock images

The National Federation of Sugarcane Planters (NFSP) and the Panay Federation of Sugarcane Farmers (Panayged) have joined calls to consult industry stakeholders in its plan to import 200,000 metric tons (MT) of refined sugar by September.

NFSP president Enrique Rojas and Panayfed president Danilo Abelita called on the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) to conduct a consultation and enlighten the industry on the basis of the proposed importation plan.

“We need to see the sugar production and demand figures which were used as the basis for such a plan,” Rojas and Abelita said.

Earlier, the Confederation of Sugar Producers Association (Confed) wrote a letter to Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. expressing their concerns over the proposed importation of refined sugar before local harvest begins.

Confed President Aurelio Gerardo Valderrama said sugar stakeholders were not consulted before such pronouncements were made.

The group is asking the SRA to consult stakeholders to discuss any policy governing the industry for crop year 2024-2025 beginning in September this year.

“Consistent with our frequently-stated position, we reiterate that any sugar importation plan should be data-based, calibrated, totally transparent and fair, done in consultation with industry stakeholders and therefore immune from speculation and manipulation,” Valderrama said.

Tiu Laurel unveiled last week the government’s plan to import 200,000 MT of refined sugar to stabilize retail prices and domestic supply.

He said the importation plan has been on the table for six months and the arrival of the imported sweetener would be timed to fill the gap before the next cropping season.

“That is the deficit we are seeing. We expect current stocks to decline by August or September, so we need to plug the supply gap by importing 200,000 metric tons of refined sugar by September or October,” he added.

Tiu Laurel said the Department of Agriculture and the SRA would flesh out the details in early July.

The NFSP had said any plan to purchase imported sugar “should only be the last resort” and only be done “when absolutely necessary.”

The United Sugar Producers Federation (Unifed) backed the importation plan as the El Niño phenomenon delayed the beginning of the harvest season.

As of Tuesday, refined sugar retailed from P74 to P90 per kilogram in Metro Manila markets, lower than P86 to P110 per kg in the same period last year, based on the DA's price monitoring.

<https://business.inquirer.net/466882/sugar-producers-seek-consultation-on-importation-plan>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

88 animals killed in Marinduque to curb spread of Q fever

By: [Jordeene B. Lagare](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:40 AM July 04, 2024



Inquirer files

MANILA, Philippines — A total of 88 animals have been slaughtered in Marinduque province as the government seeks to prevent the spread of Query fever, also known as Q fever, a disease that can affect both humans and animals.

Local authorities killed and disposed of 81 goats and seven cattle (six adults and one calf) from a farm in Barangay Napo, Santa Cruz town, according to the country's report to the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH).

The report also said that three other goats died because of the disease.

The Philippines' report to WOAH noted that clinical signs were observed in some of the goats as early as February. But the presence of Q fever in the country was confirmed only on June 19 based on the results of tests conducted by the Philippine Carabao Center.

Control measures, the report said, have already been applied, including disinfection, movement control, quarantine, screening, official disposal of carcasses, by-products

and waste, and stamping out, while surveillance within and outside the restricted zone would be carried out.

It added that the affected animals consisted of 67 imported Anglo-Nubian goats (57 does or female goats and 10 bucks or male goats) and seven kids.

The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) earlier confirmed the first case of Q fever in the country but said the outbreak was “controlled.”

“Infected goats have been depopulated and tracing of potentially infected animals is ongoing to prevent the spread of Q fever,” Christian Daquigan, officer in charge of the BAI National Veterinary Quarantine Services Division, said in a press conference last month.

“We will continue to monitor the situation closely and take all the necessary actions to control the cases,” he added.

Importation ban

The Department of Agriculture has also temporarily banned the importation of live goats from the United States after the latter confirmed Q fever cases in its territory last month, making it the first officially confirmed case in imported goats.

According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), Q fever is caused by a bacteria called *Coxiella burnetii* that affects both humans and animals. A person may catch the disease from an infected animal through contaminated milk or by handling the fetus, placenta or fluids from an infected animal which had given birth.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1957725/88-animals-killed-in-marinduque-to-curb-spread-of-q-fever>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

New expectations for DepEd

By: [Anna Cristina Tuazon](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:20 AM July 04, 2024

Sen. Sonny Angara is the new Department of Education (DepEd) secretary. As the President had promised, the appointment came soon after the Vice President had resigned from her Cabinet post. His selection generated a lot of hope from different sectors, from his colleagues in the Senate to teachers' groups like the Alliance of Concerned Teachers as he had extensive policy experience in educational reforms such as the Unified Student Financial Assistance System Act scholarships, Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, and Open Learning and Distance Education Act.

Taking on DepEd's challenges is a gargantuan task. At the very least, however, here is the bare minimum of what we expect of a DepEd secretary:

Take the issues seriously. This means taking the time and effort to understand what perpetuates the problems and what prevents them from being solved. Rather than a trial-and-error approach, it is important to be systematic as education issues are deeply rooted. It is better to take a long view of the problem rather than getting distracted by short-term, reactionary band-aid strategies. Take advantage of the groundwork laid out by the Year One Report of the Second Congressional Commission on Education, which identified the numerous problems of basic education. Avoid bluster and using the department for political gain.

Listen to your stakeholders. This includes educational experts, teachers, administration and support staff, students, and their families. Understand your personal strengths and weaknesses as the top executive of the agency. If you are not an educator by profession, heed the wisdom of those who devoted their lives to the field. Make sure to get input both from the old guards of the department, who have the institutional memory, and the up-and-coming innovators, who have fresh ideas and perspectives to offer.

Understand the community surrounding the child. Educating a child is far different from educating law students. Working with children requires working with their parents. Supporting parents requires supporting their livelihood and capacity to provide well for their child. A child needs a safe community in order to focus on learning. A child can only learn when they are well-fed and cared for. In a way, this is why improving public education is an almost impossible task because to fix a child's education means to fix a child's life.

Collaborate with other agencies. The problems of DepEd cannot be fixed by the agency alone. The poor quality of early childhood education sets up students to fail in basic education. Malnutrition hinders students' capacity to absorb and practice the lessons. Climate-related disasters rob students of valuable learning days. I say let's start with the basics. Collaborate with other agencies such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) to beef up the school-based feeding program. This will help in supporting the child's cognitive development. This will also help incentivize parents to send children to school as they will at least be assured free meals. The DA can connect farmers to the program, ensuring income for farmers and fresh produce for the schools. The DSWD and local government units can use the program as a source of jobs for those who will prepare the meals. They can also collaborate with the Commission on Higher Education to improve teacher quality and fast-track teaching innovation by offering public schools as teaching labs. This can accelerate education research as well as inject public schools with simultaneous innovation.

Serve as a role model for students. As an education leader, be mindful of your words and actions. If DepEd requires students to take up Good Manners and Right Conduct, ensure that you embody it. Be courteous and professional in the way you communicate. Do not get defensive. Be open to correction and feedback. Do not be afraid to ask for help. Be willing to learn yourself.

To go beyond the minimum, I have a radical suggestion: Immerse yourself in the day-to-day workings of public education. Put yourself in the shoes of a teacher for one day. Experience what it's like to prepare a lesson plan. Manage a classroom full of students. Grade papers. Create modules and manage asynchronous classes. Then put

yourself in the other shoe, that of the student. Accompany a student on a regular school day, starting from how early they must wake up to prepare for school. See how tired and famished they are before the first class has even started. Take on a student's homework and see how long it takes to complete them. Better yet, try doing them in a shared room with no quiet or privacy.

The attitude and mindset of a leader matters, especially with responsibilities as big as those carried by DepEd. While there are many things beyond Angara's control as the new secretary, how he begins will tell us what lies ahead for the country's public education.

<https://opinion.inquirer.net/174910/new-expectations-for-deped>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Agri department turns to ‘AI’ to rebuild hog industry

By: [Jordeene B. Lagare](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 02:22 AM July 04, 2024

The government is turning to artificial insemination or “AI” to increase the hog population in the Philippines as part of continuing efforts to revive the industry still grappling with African swine fever (ASF).

In this light, the Department of Agriculture (DA) issued Memorandum Circular No. 28 to implement the Modified Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion (Inspire) Program.

The Inspire program focuses on accelerating calibrated repopulation and production expansion through farm clustering and consolidation, seeking to regain the industry’s capacity to produce a sufficient supply of hogs and pork.

But since its implementation in 2021, the DA sees the need to revise, adjust and improve current strategies “to address challenges and practical concerns” that will ensure the successful implementation of the hog population.

“There is a need to enhance and refocus the implementing strategies of the repopulation program, to achieve the targets of the project and stabilize the price of pork in the retail market,” the July 1 memo read.

It added that ASF is a “very resistant virus” which can survive on clothes, boots, wheels and other surfaces.

“Once a farm or a herd is affected, the chance of eradicating the disease is slim since there is no treatment or available vaccine as of the moment. It is not a danger to human health but when pig herds are affected, there is a 100-percent mortality rate,” the DA said.

The Modified Inspire Program will work on creating breeder farms with quality breeder stocks in select areas, and adopting enhanced institute biosecurity measures. It will prioritize areas or islands free of animal disease.

“This specifically will revive the swine industry, address the shortage of piglets, give livelihood to previous swine raisers, and ensure ownership and sustainability of the intervention,” the DA said.

The agency also expects the program to reduce the possibility of ASF infection, sustain the production of piglets and provide technical support to beneficiaries.

The revised program will substitute 10 percent of imported pork (about 60,000 metric tons) by boosting local production.

It will apply the sow-weaner operation through the establishment of multiplier and production farms to produce piglets for weaning using AI.

Multiplier farms will house grandparent swine breeder stocks to produce parent stocks while production farms will maintain parent stocks and/or F1 stocks—the cross between to pure-bred parents—to produce piglets intended for grow-out as slaughter pigs.

Each farm is required to build a biosecurity facility with a minimum land area of 2,000 to 5,000 square meters, inclusive of the perimeter fence, climate-controlled animal house/conventional facility, waste management, basic farm equipment, office and shower area.

<https://business.inquirer.net/466995/agri-dept-turns-to-ai-to-rebuild-hog-industry>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Hog output gains seen cutting pork import demand by 10%

July 3, 2024 | 8:58 pm



REUTERS

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it expects a swine repopulation program to raise output by about 60,000 metric tons (MT) this year, potentially reducing demand for pork imports by about 10%.

In Memorandum Circular No. 28, the DA said it will push for the recovery of the hog industry via the establishment of multiplier and production farms employing artificial insemination under the Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion (INSPIRE) program.

“There is a need to enhance and refocus the implementing strategies of the repopulation program, to achieve the targets of the project,” it added.

During the first quarter, hog production declined 4.3% to 419.37 thousand MT, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority. This was a reversal from the 5.1% growth posted a year earlier.

Imports of pork, on the other hand, rose 11.9% to 128.51 million kilos in the first quarter, according to the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI).

The DA said the INSPIRE program will focus on areas that are free of African Swine Fever (ASF).

“This will ensure the sustainable supply of breeders, feed, semen, access to markets, and overall logistical and technical support,” it said.

The DA added that beneficiaries will be adopting modern climate-controlled building systems or conventional facilities compliant with Biosecurity Level 1.

It said piglets produced by multiplier farms would be distributed to participating hog raisers engaged in contract growing or finishing.

“It is expected that this approach will reduce the possibility of ASF infection, facilitate sustained production of piglets, provide of technical support to beneficiaries, and enable efficient monitoring organized by the farmer cooperatives and associations (FCA),” the DA said.

It added that beneficiaries may opt to avail of a production farm package worth P5.5 million to P16.2 million.

As of June 21, 10 provinces had active cases of ASF across 21 municipalities, according to the BAI.
— **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/07/03/606027/hog-output-gains-seen-cutting-pork-import-demand-by-10/>

REMATE:

Mataas na presyo ng kamatis posibleng tumagal ng isa ‘gang dalawang linggo

July 3, 2024 19:17



MANILA, Philippines – Tiniyak ng Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Martes na bababa ang tumataas na presyo ng mga kamatis sa loob ng isang linggo o dalawa kasunod ng kasalukuyang ani.

Ayon sa DA Bantay Presyo nitong Lunes, ang mga kamatis sa Metro Manila ay ibinebenta sa halagang P120 hanggang P180 kada kilo.

“Iyong kamatis, ang harvest ay magdadatingan ang maraming volume,” sinabi ni DA Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa sa isang panayam.

Paliwanag pa ni De Mesa, ang kasalukuyang pagtaas ng presyo ay dahil sa pagkaantala ng ani sa Nueva Vizcaya at sa epekto ng Bagyong Aghon noong Mayo.

“Mayroong konti na na-delay ang iyong ani, kagaya dun sa Norte. Pero doon sa ibang area na nagtatanim, Central and Southern Luzon, ay okay naman,” ayon pa sa opisyal.

“Natandaan din natin na nagkaroon ng delay dahil sa mga bagyo at saka iyong pag-uulan lalo na dun sa Southern Tagalog,” sabi ni De Mesa.

Idinagdag niya na bagama’t mas mataas ang presyo sa merkado ng mga kamatis sa panahon ng tag-ulan, maaaring nasa pinakamataas na ang PHP160/kg na karaniwang presyo.

“Hindi na siguro tataas, ito na iyon, kasi alam nila na marami na rin parating,” sinabi pa nito. *Santi Celario*

<https://remate.ph/mataas-na-presyo-ng-kamatis-posibleng-tumagal-ng-isa-gang-dalawang-linggo/>

REMATE:

P1.37-B ayuda ipinamahagi sa mga magsasaka, mangingisdang sapul ng El Niño

July 3, 2024 12:21



MANILA, Philippines – UPANG suportahan ang mga magsasaka at mangingisda nagbigay ang Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) ng P1.37 bilyon na tulong sa ilalim ng Presidential Assistance to Farmers, Fisherfolk and Families (PAFFF) program para sa mga apektado ng El Niño.

Ayon sa DSWD ang tulong ay naglalayong mabawasan ang epekto ng climate phenomenon sa mga komunidad ng agrikultura sa buong bansa.

Kaugnay nito noong Hulyo 1, 137,333 benepisyaryo sa Cagayan Valley, Bicol Region, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, Western Mindanao, Northern Mindanao, Davao Region, SOCCSKSARGEN (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, General Santos City), at Caraga Region ay may bawat isa ay tumanggap ng P10,000.

Samantala ang PAFFF ay nagbibigay ng unconditional cash assistance upang matulungan ang mga magsasaka at mangingisda na makabangon mula sa pagkalugi sa ekonomiya dulot ng El Niño.

Sinabi ni DSWD Assistant Secretary for Disaster Response Management Group at Spokesperson Irene Dumlao na ang mga benepisyaryo ay ang mga maaaring walang access sa mga regular na uri ng tulong dahil hindi sila kabilang sa pinakamahihirap na populasyon.

Bukod sa cash assistance, nagbibigay din ang DSWD ng food packs sa mga pamilya at indibidwal na apektado ng El Niño.

Batay sa datos ng DSWD, 1.6 milyong pamilya, o 6.1 milyong indibidwal, ang naapektuhan ng climate phenomenon.

Samantala, iniulat ng Department of Agriculture na ang El Niño-related agricultural damage ay umabot sa P9.89 bilyon, na sumasaklaw sa 170,469 ektarya at nakaapekto sa 173,455 na magsasaka at mangingisda sa 12 rehiyon noong Hunyo 10. (*Santi Celario*)

<https://remate.ph/p1-37-b-ayuda-ipinamahagi-sa-mga-magsasaka-mangingisdang-sapul-ng-el-nino/>

REMATE:

Presyo ng bigas bumaba sa huling linggo ng Hunyo – PSA

July 3, 2024 10:47



MANILA, Philippines – SINABI ng Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) na bumaba ang presyo ng karamihan sa mga bilihin ng agrikultura noong huling linggo ng Hunyo. Batay sa national price situationer nito para sa ikalawang yugto ng Hunyo, iniulat ng PSA na apat na produktong pang-agrikultura ang bumaba sa panahon habang tatlo ang tumaas.

Ayon sa PSA ang average na presyo ng isang kilo ng staple regular milled rice ay bahagyang bumaba sa P51.14 mula sa P51.26 at P51.33 noong huling bahagi ng Mayo at unang bahagi ng Hunyo, ayon sa pagkakabanggit.

Nabatid pa na napansin din ang Galunggong o round scad ang pagbaba ng presyo sa P193.98 kada kilo mula sa P196.22 noong unang bahagi ng Hunyo. Gayunpaman, mas mataas pa rin ito kumpara sa P189.06 na naitala noong unang bahagi ng Mayo.

Kaugnay nito bumaba din ang presyo ng isang kilo ng calamansi sa P94.12 mula sa P96.52 na naitala dati, habang ang refined sugar ay naging P87.19 mula sa P87.38.

Sa kabilang banda, ang sariwang karne ng baboy na may buto ay nagtala ng makabuluhang pagtaas sa P305.30 kada kilo mula sa P303.76 at P304.05 na naitala dati.

Samantala, halos sampung beses na tumaas ang isang kilo ng kamatis sa P80.07 mula sa P71.47 at 68.96, gayundin ang hawaiian ginger sa P200.88 mula sa P185.57 at P162.60.

Nauna nang nilagdaan ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ang isang executive order (EO) na magbabago sa import duty rates ng iba't ibang commodities, kabilang ang bigas, para mapigil ang inflationary pressure at protektahan ang purchasing power ng mga Pilipino.

Sa ilalim ng EO, babawasan ang rice levy mula 35 porsiyento hanggang 15 porsiyento.

Gayunpaman, pinananatili ng gobyerno ang mga taripa para sa mga produkto tulad ng mais, baboy, mechanically deboned meats, asukal, at mga gulay tulad ng sibuyas, shallots, bawang, broccoli, carrots, repolyo, at lettuce, at iba pa.

Nauna nang sinabi ni National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan na ang epekto ng pagbaba ng taripa sa presyo ng bigas ay maaaring maramdaman sa Hulyo o Agosto dahil tumataas pa rin ang presyo ng mundo.

Sinabi rin ni Balisacan na layunin ng gobyerno na bawasan ang presyo ng isang kilo ng bigas sa P29 para sa mahihirap, kasabay ng cash assistance. *Santi Celario*

<https://remate.ph/presyo-ng-bigas-bumaba-sa-huling-linggo-ng-hunyo-psa/>

Dar now leads Isaaa

By The Manila Times

July 4, 2024

FORMER agriculture secretary William Dar has been appointed the chairman of the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (Isaaa), a nonprofit organization disseminating bioscience technologies to key stakeholders, particularly resource-poor farmers in developing countries.

In its website, Isaaa said Dar succeeds Paul Teng, who has been the chairman of the organization from 2013 to June 1, 2024.

"Isaaa Inc. welcomes Dr. William D. Dar, former Secretary of the Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA), as the new chair of Isaaa Board of Trustees. During his term as the DA Secretary under President Joseph Estrada's administration (1998-1999), the agricultural sector of the Philippines recorded a 9.6-percent growth, an achievement that has never been achieved until today," Isaaa said.



Former agriculture secretary William Dar has been appointed the chairman of the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dar, who wrote columns for The Manila Times, said he envisions Isaaa to become a knowledge center for agricultural biotechnology in Asia and Oceania.

"I envision Isaaa Inc. as: The premier knowledge center of agricultural biotechnology in Asia and Oceania. Information sharing, capacity building support and building partnerships are key strategies," he added.

Dar was also agriculture secretary for nearly three years during the Duterte administration that saw the Philippines attain record palay (unmilled rice) yields of 19.29 million metric tons (MT) and 19.96 million MT in 2020 and 2021, respectively.

He also was the secretary-general of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics from 1999 to 2014, which saw the center make a significant impact on parts of India and Africa considered to be semi-arid or short on water.

For his part, Teng has been the dean and managing director of the National Institute of Education International at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore since 2018 and had stints with the WorldFish Center and the International Rice Research Institute.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/04/business/agribusiness/dar-now-leads-isaaa/1954982>

NVizcaya town gets onion storage facility

By Leander C. Domingo

July 4, 2024

DUPAX DEL SUR, Nueva Vizcaya — Targeting to enhance the onion industry in the province, the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 2 (DA-RFO2) and the municipal local government unit have started to construct a cold storage facility worth P40 million in Dupax del Sur.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary for Logistics Daniel Alfonso Atayde, who graced the groundbreaking for the facility on June 21, said the construction of the storage is in support of the onion industry in the province.

"This project represents not only our aim of accomplishing a project but the department's drive of providing logistics for productivity and sustainability," Atayde said.

He added that this storage with a capacity of 20,000 bags "will not only serve as a storage facility but a testament of our commitment to innovations in agriculture."

Atayde also noted that through the leadership of Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., the DA will continue to assist in the marketing and processing of onions and other commodities.

DA-RFO2 Executive Director Mary Rose Aquino said the new facility is an addition to the two onion cold storage facilities constructed in Aritao town.

During the groundbreaking, Aquino congratulated the Dupax del Sur local government for embracing the project that will benefit onion

growers' associations in the municipality, particularly in the villages of Santa Maria, Gabut and Mangayang.

She also noted that on top of the total cost of the project, another P3 million has been allocated for the procurement of a generator set, pallets and electrical expenses.

"This is now the fulfillment of [the] DA's promise to your local government unit for the provision of onion cold storage when we inaugurated the two units constructed in Aritao in previous years," she told farmers of this town.

"We are looking forward to more of this not only in Nueva Vizcaya but other provinces as part of our expansion program," Aquino said, adding that farmers are now interested in planting onion after rice, corn and vegetables to boost their incomes.

Dupax del Sur Mayor Neil Magaway thanked the DA for the onion storage facility.

"Expect that we will take care of this very important project in our municipality to improve the lives of our people, especially our onion farmers," Magaway said.

Carol Albay, DA-RFO2 High Value Crops Development Program regional coordinator, reported that the Cagayan Valley (Region 2) has a total of 1,778 hectares of production area for onion.

"Of this, 91 percent comes from Nueva Vizcaya, hence, this cold storage is necessary for our farmers and the whole onion industry," Albay said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/04/business/agribusiness/nvizcaya-town-gets-onion-storage-facility/1954981>

2025 budget passage House priority

By Red Mendoza

July 4, 2024

THE passage of the P6.35 trillion 2025 National Budget, amendments to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) and the Agrarian Reform Act are among the key legislative priorities of the House of Representatives as it enters its third regular session.

Speaker Martin Romualdez said that the 2025 National Expenditure Program of the government would be among the major priority legislation that the House of Representatives would focus on as it outlines the programs and projects of the government for next year.

"It's the biggest one as all programs, projects and initiatives of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s administration will be laid out," Romualdez said in Filipino in a radio interview.

The speaker said that they aim to pass the proposed 2025 budget before they take a break in September, replicating the same timeframe the House made when it passed the 2024 budget last year.

Romualdez said that the House would ensure funding for education, agriculture, the modernization and welfare programs of the armed forces, infrastructure, and the legacy projects of President Marcos.

He added that education, health, agriculture, infrastructure and defense should be supported as well to make food products accessible and affordable and accelerate the country's development in an environment of peace and stability.

"We have to continue building roads, highways, ports, school buildings, climate change-proof structures and similar infrastructure to maintain and expand economic growth. Progress has to reach the remotest communities," Romualdez said.

House Appropriations Committee chairman and Ako Bicol Party-list Rep. Elizaldy Co said that they aim to craft a budget that would "serve the people" and ensure that it would "address the essential needs of citizens."

"We will meticulously examine the NEP to guarantee that it reflects the aspirations and needs of our people. This way, we want to create a budget that not only supports economic growth but would also create inclusivity and social justice," Co added.

Romualdez said that they were focusing on the amendments to the Agrarian Reform law, especially in the retention and expansion of the number of hectares of land among farmers, as well as the amendments to the Epira law, which could lead to a drastic reduction in power rates.

These two laws, as well as the amendments to the Foreign Investors' Long Term Lease law, are among the 28 bills that are included in the priority list of the Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council (Ledac) to be approved before the conclusion of the 19th Congress.

Meanwhile, the speaker said that the amendments to the lease law would see foreign investors lease up to 99 years from the 75 years currently allowed.

"We are going to look into these bills while we are reviewing and approving the national budget," Romualdez said.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/07/04/news/national/2025-budget-passage-house-priority/1955025>

DBM: 2025 budget priorities align with PDP, 8-point agenda

Reine Juvierre S. Alberto

July 4, 2024

WITH the P6.352-trillion approved national budget for 2025, the development of infrastructure, human capital, enterprise and climate-smart and disaster-resilient communities; food security; research and development and innovation; government's digital transformation; and devolution strategy will be prioritized.

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) said the budget priorities align with meeting the requirements of the Marcos Jr.'s administration's 8-Point Socioeconomic Agenda and the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028.

“We have crafted this carefully and meticulously to ensure that we stay on track with our economic growth targets while ensuring no one is left behind,” Budget Secretary Amenah F. Pangandaman assure the public on Wednesday.

According to the 2025 Budget Priorities Framework (Expenditure Priorities), published by the DBM, it would sustain the momentum of the Build Better More program and prioritize the completion of ongoing infrastructure programs, activities and projects.

The infrastructure funding will also support innovative financing solutions and strategic partnerships with the private sector, considering only shovel-ready proposals aligned with the investment priorities, as well as enhancing connectivity through transportation projects.

The DBM added the budget will prioritize synergizing water supply and sanitation projects through the Water Resources Program.

Under human capital development, the budget will help achieve the MATATAG Agenda in the education sector—which is making the curriculum relevant, taking steps to accelerate the delivery of basic education facilities and services, taking good care of learners and giving support to teachers.

Access to Early Childhood Education will also be strengthened and expanded as well as the acceleration of delivery of Basic Education Facilities. It will also develop and pursue globally competitive and inclusive Technical and Vocational Education and Training and higher education programs.

In terms of health, the budget will prioritize accelerating the Universal Health Care Act, establishing healthcare facilities, improving the supply and deployment of Human Resources for Health and promoting digital health initiatives.

To provide social protection to Filipinos, the establishment and upgrading of interoperable social registries and targeting systems for vulnerable sectors and shift to digital payments of cash transfer programs will be focused on.

This is to achieve a universal, modern, and integrated social protection system and develop and implement adaptive and shock-responsive interventions, the DBM said.

Labor and employment are also among the budget priorities, which will highlight efforts to upskill and reskill the labor force, implement the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) and Philippine Skill Framework (PSF), strengthen existing employment facilitation services and enhance income support and emergency employment programs.

The implementation of the Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino, the development of alternative housing financing mechanisms and mobilizing public and private investments in the housing industry will be allocated funding.

The National Farm-to-Market Roads Network Plan 2023-2028 will also be executed to ensure food security and adopt and maximize climate-smart technologies.

To strengthen businesses in the country, the Philippine Ease of Doing Business, Efficient Government Delivery Reporting System and the National Competition Policy will be fully implemented.

It will also lay the groundwork for “mindfacturing,” an industrialization strategy driven by science, technology, and innovation and will promote multidimensional tourism and enhance tourism service quality.

Research and Development (R&D) and Innovation will continuously foster innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, promote and invite the private sector for investments in R&D, and pursue an enhanced Academe-Industry-Government R&D linkage.

The government will also invest in faster, more reliable and equitable broadband connectivity across remote and unserved areas and prioritize policies and regulations to promote competition, investments and inclusive digital access.

To develop climate-smart and disaster-resilient communities, the government vowed to expedite the implementation of the National Adaptation Plan and strengthen climate and risk data information management systems.

Local government units (LGUs) will be provided advisory and technical support and capacity development interventions as the national government pursues the devolution of basic services and facilities to LGUs.

The allocation for LGUs will also harmonize regional plans and national priorities and adopt recommendations from ongoing and forthcoming policy studies on improving transition efforts.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. approved the 2025 national budget, higher by 10.1 percent than the P5.768-trillion budget for 2024, on July 2.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/04/dbm-2025-budget-priorities-align-with-pdp-8-point-agenda/>

DA to focus on disaster resilience, support for affected communities

Ada Pelonia

July 3, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) on Wednesday stressed the need for continued dedication to disaster resilience and support for affected communities.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. called on everyone to redouble their efforts to restore affected enterprises and recover the nation's losses due to the ill effects of El Niño.

“The farmers and fishermen of provinces hard-hit by the drought have shown great courage and resilience in dealing with the tremendous damage it has left behind,” Laurel said in a statement.

“I urge the men and women of this agency and our colleagues in the Office of Civil Defense to respond with equivalent tenacity as we continue to restore their enterprises and regain what our nation has lost,” he added.

Laurel also reported that President Marcos has pledged to strengthen the farm and fishery sectors against future calamities, aiming to build a well-organized, modern agriculture and fisheries sector which can drive the national economy and ensure food security.

“The President has vowed to build a well-organized, modern agriculture and fisheries sector brimming with hope and resilience—able to drive the national economy, feed our nation, and compete with its counterparts abroad. Together, we must renew our dedication to the work of turning that national policy into a living reality,” he said.

Meanwhile, Office of Civil Defense (OCD) Assistant Secretary Raffy Alejandro underscored the critical role of the DA in disaster resilience. He highlighted how the agency's efforts are essential for maintaining food security, enhancing

productivity, balancing the supply and demand of food and raw materials, and modernizing the agriculture sector.

“These sensitive agriculture and food security systems are needed to effectively respond to the increasing severity and frequency of disaster events mainly attributed to climate change,” he said.

The department commemorated the 36th National Disaster Resilience Month under this year’s theme “Bantayog ng Katatagan at ang Pagbubuklod sa Layuning Kahandaan.” The yearly observance of National Disaster Resilience Month is mandated by Executive Order 29, signed by former President Rodrigo Duterte on June 28, 2017.

The order directs nationwide activities during National Disaster Resilience Month, focusing on enhancing disaster resilience in four key areas: prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and rehabilitation.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/03/da-to-focus-on-disaster-resilience-support-for-affected-communities/>

Guidelines set for swine industry's recovery program

Ada Pelonia

July 3, 2024

AGRICULTURE Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. on Wednesday issued a memorandum that modified the implementation of the Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion (Inspire) program to revive the industry and give livelihood to previous hog raisers.

The Inspire program together with the Bantay ASF sa Barangay, which started in 2021, deals with the recovery and repopulation of the lost hog population struck by the deadly African swine fever (ASF) through community clustering, distribution of piglets, and firming up of biosecurity management.

Tiu's Memorandum Circular (MC) 28 Series of 2024 states that ASF continues to pose a serious concern on food security in the country and the rising and unstable price of pork.

"There is a need to enhance and refocus the implementing strategies of the repopulation program, to achieve the targets of the project and stabilize the price of pork in the retail market," MC 28 read.

It added that this year, the program targets to substitute 10 percent of imported pork or approximately 60,000 metric tons (MT) by boosting domestic production.

"The strategy will focus on sow-weaner operation through the establishment of multiplier and production farms [sow-weaner operation] with artificial insemination [AI]."

It also said that the Farmers' Cooperatives and Associations (FCAs) and local government-beneficiaries should adopt modern climate-controlled building systems or conventional facilities but compliant with Biosecurity Level 1.

It added that the FCA or local governments should continue to follow the requirements to ensure freedom from ASF as provided in prevailing DA issuances.

“The piglets produced from Multiplier Farms will be distributed to their members for breeding while those produced at Production farms will be distributed to members or existing grower-finisher farm projects of DA for finishing, or sell them through a contract with a registered buyer or a big swine company,” MC 28 read.

It added that this approach would lessen the possibility of ASF infection, facilitate sustained production of piglets, provision of technical support to beneficiaries, and efficient monitoring organized by FCA under the supervision of the LGU veterinary office or the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI).

“Clustering would enable marketing efforts to be more efficient, and the prospects of value addition and maximized profits can be realized,” MC 28 read.

It also stated that the modified INSPIRE will give primacy to ASF-free areas and/or islands, noting that the FCA or LGU swine clusters or compartments will be encouraged to pursue a contract growing arrangement with swine integrators as a recommended scheme

“This will ensure the sustainable supply of breeders, feeds, semen, access to markets, and overall logistical and technical support.” Ada Pelonia

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/03/guidelines-set-for-swine-industrys-recovery-program/>

Congressman seeks blacklisting of fish, food products smugglers

Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz

July 3, 2024

THE chairman of the House Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources has strongly backed the Department of Agriculture's stepped up campaign against agricultural smuggling by blacklisting importers of fish and other food products involved in this illicit trade.

Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan, the nominee to the House of Representatives of the party-list group Bicol Saro, the panel chairman, said that fish smuggling undermines the livelihoods of small fishermen and jeopardizes consumer safety.

While commending the DA' plan to blacklist suspected smugglers, he urged that this action be followed by the filing of criminal cases against the offending traders.

“We will await the action of the Department of Agriculture on this matter. We are counting on Agriculture Secretary [Francisco Tiu] Laurel [Jr.] to make his move soon against these suspected smugglers,” Yamsuan said.

Yamsuan issued the statement in response to Laurel's recent announcement of his plan to blacklist at least four importers suspected of acts classified as economic sabotage. Laurel said they involve one rice importer, two fish traders, and a sugar importer.

“Blacklisting erring agricultural importers should not be the DA's only measure against them. If there is enough evidence, then criminal cases should be hurled against them in court,” said Yamsuan.

The lawmaker said blacklisted companies may just resort to using dummy firms to continue their illegal activities.

Yamsuan pointed out that under the current law, large-scale fish smuggling is classified as economic sabotage if the amount of the goods subject of the crime is at least P1 million as valued by the Bureau of Customs (BOC).

The punishment for this crime under Republic Act 10845 is life imprisonment and a fine of twice the fair value of the smuggled fish products, along with the aggregate amount of the taxes, duties, and other charges involved.

Yamsuan said a new measure—the proposed Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act—aims to strengthen RA 10845 by including hoarding, profiteering, and cartel as acts of economic sabotage when the value of each agricultural and fishery product involved in these illegal activities amounts to at least P1 million.

Certified by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. as an urgent measure, this proposed law also increases the fine for acts of economic sabotage to thrice the value of the goods that are the subject of the crime.

The measure has already been approved by both the Senate and the House of Representatives and is awaiting the president’s signature.

“We hope that this will be signed by the President and enacted soon so that it can serve as a strong deterrent to agricultural smugglers,” Yamsuan said.

“Agricultural smugglers undermine our collective goal of attaining food security and jeopardize the livelihoods of our farmers and fishermen. They also place the safety of consumers at risk because smuggled food products do not undergo the necessary measures that are meant to ensure that these are fit and safe for human consumption,” he added.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/03/congressman-seeks-blacklisting-of-fish-food-products-smugglers/>